

## **PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

### **ISSUES**

Fairfax County Public Library's branches differ in size, type of collection, services available and patrons served. But they all have one thing in common: a commitment to provide easy access to a multitude of resources for the education, entertainment, business or pleasure of Fairfax County and Fairfax City residents of all ages.

Significant changes in the 1990's motivated the Library to adopt strategic planning. Changing demographics indicate a growing diversity among residents and among communities within the County. Expanding technologies offer new opportunities and new user demands to improve information resources and delivery. Increasing costs combined with shrinking resources mean that the Library cannot distribute all resources to all locations equally. The Library must provide a network of facilities that offer library services responding to the needs of the community in which each library is located and system wide mechanisms to share resources among branches.

New facilities must be designed to utilize new technologies for information delivery, and existing facilities from the early 1960's must be redesigned and renovated to maximize the use of their space and of these modern technologies.

The Library Board of Trustees, whose members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors, the School Board and Fairfax City Council, is responsible for library functions, policy and direction. The Library Board developed its library construction program after study of long-range space needs. Planning is also based on "Recommended Minimum Standards for Virginia Public Libraries," published by the Library of Virginia, which sets basic requirements for receiving supplemental State Aid. The approved construction projects are based on such factors as the age and condition of buildings, projected population growth, usage and insufficiency at existing facilities, and demand for services in unserved areas of the County.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

- 1) To continue to provide a modern network of effective, relevant and efficient library services that are convenient and accessible for the changing population of Fairfax County.
- 2) To locate library facilities to provide service to the greatest number of persons within designated service areas, and provide high visibility, safe and easy access, and ample size for the building, parking areas, landscaping and future expansion.
- 3) To ensure that library facilities are compatible with adjacent land uses and with the character of the surrounding community and that the size of each facility provides adequate space for the population to be served.
- 4) To continually evaluate patron needs and usage, providing a basis for responsible library management decisions in the public interest.

### **COMPREHNSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE**

As stated in the Fairfax County Policy Plan, library facilities should be centrally located within designated service areas in order to provide service to the greatest number of persons within service areas. Libraries should also be highly visible within the communities they serve. Visibility, however, is concomitant with the need for these facilities to be compatible with adjacent land uses and with the character of the surrounding community.

The Policy Plan indicates that Regional libraries are the foundation of the library system. The needs of the community dictate the size and scope of branch services. For the overall system, the Plan articulates a standard of at least .4 square feet of library space per resident.

Regional libraries are larger facilities generally requiring between 30,000 and 35,000 square feet to offer a comprehensive collection of materials, services and programs consumed at a rate of about 50,000 items borrowed monthly. Regional libraries provide services to their

local community and support informational needs of all County users on a coordinated and shared basis.

Community libraries generally range in size from 10,000 to 15,000 square feet, and usage should sustain monthly borrowing of 10,000 or more items. These facilities provide a mix of library services including electronic resources designed to serve the community in which the library is located.

### **RECENT PROGRAM ACTIVITY**

The fall 1989 Public Library Facilities bond referendum provided funds for new construction and for the expansion of existing libraries. It included the following projects which have been implemented.

The Chantilly Regional Library (26,000 square feet) opened in January 1995 and also includes a Technical Operations Center (25,000 square feet). Herndon Fortnightly Community Library (17,000 square feet) opened in June 1995, replacing a smaller facility. Patrick Henry Community Library in Vienna (13,000 square feet) also reopened in June 1995 after renovation and expansion. The George Mason Regional Library reopened in April 1998 after extensive renovation and expansion (30,000 square feet). The Kingstowne Community Library (15,000 square feet) in a retail partnership opened in June 2000. The Great Falls Community Library (13,000 square feet) was completed in October 2000. Land for a community library in the Oakton area was acquired in 2000 through a developer's proffer. More recently, land was purchased for the Burke Centre Library and for the Kingstowne Regional Library at a combined cost of \$5.367 million from bond monies.

There are no library projects currently scheduled over the five-year CIP period for FY 2003 – FY 2007; therefore, a project cost summaries table is not included for this functional area. However, some of the older existing libraries in the County are in need of renovation and more space. To evaluate the scope of work and costs associated with renovation and expansion of existing facilities, feasibility and conceptual design studies were completed in FY 2001 for:

- Thomas Jefferson Community Library
- Richard Byrd Community Library
- Dolley Madison Community Library
- Martha Washington Community Library.

Feasibility and conceptual design studies for the potential expansion and renovation are also needed for:

- Reston Regional Library
- Pohick Regional Library
- John Marshall Community Library
- Woodrow Wilson Community Library
- Tysons Pimmit Regional Library

Funding for the five feasibility studies are currently not programmed. Cost for renovation and expansion of existing facilities as well as new building construction for the Burke Centre Community Library, Oakton Community Library and Kingstowne Regional Library is anticipated to be funded by a future bond referendum.

A library bond referendum is currently scheduled for Fall 2004. The referendum amount is to be determined. Specific projects to be included in the referendum will be consistent with the Library Board's recommendations and priorities.

The Board of Supervisors directed staff to include preliminary planning and scoping funds for Burke and Oakton Libraries at a cost of \$550,000 using general funds to be identified at the FY 2002 Carryover Review, if available.